

Information and Syllabus for Eighth Grade English
Ms. Haywood and Ms. Whitfield 2015-2016

This eighth grade English class will focus on helping you to develop four main skills: reading closely, writing clearly, speaking thoughtfully, and listening carefully.

Essential Questions: The curriculum is designed to allow students to examine these important questions: What are the forces that shape the identity of an individual? How does bias impact a person's life?

Course Objectives: Overall, the course objectives include:

- To read a variety of texts from guided choice
- To write in a variety of genres
- To develop coherent and organized essays
- To debate, discuss, share and evaluate ideas and texts in class discussions
- To identify and evaluate and synthesize evidence in writing
- To use rich, varied language

For each unit, there will be student-led discussions, homework and reading. Additionally there will be assessments on grammar, sentence diagramming, reading comprehension, spelling and vocabulary. There will be one writing project per quarter. Students will take an assessment at the end of each unit. The assessment may include an essay, short answer, or multiple-choice questions. At the conclusion of the school year, students will take a comprehensive final examination that covers material from all quarters. This final exam is worth 20% of the grade for the entire year.

Reading:

This year, you will be reading both texts of your own, guided choice and ones shared with your classmates. You must also maintain a spiral notebook with class notes and a binder with handouts and homework assignments. For the choice and shared books, you must annotate what you read. You will have a variety of assignments and assessments based on those readings.

Writing:

Over the course of this year you will write in a variety of genres, including poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and essays. We will spend time working on writing mechanics or grammar, as well. We will also have writing workshops.

To become a strong writer, you must edit and revise your work over and over again. You will hand in all drafts of a written piece for a grade; the final draft must be substantially revised, typed, and in the following format:

- Margins: one inch (1.0") for top, bottom, right, and left
- Font type: Times New Roman; Font size: 12 pt; Font color: black
- Single-line spaced header: put your name, class, and date in the top right corner (each on a separate line)
- Title: center your title on the next line after the header using a double-line spaced format (do not underline it)
- Tabs: indent all paragraphs one-half inch (0.5")
- Double space all text, but do NOT add additional spaces between paragraphs
- Length: maximum three pages
- Citation: if you use sources in your writing, you must cite them

Example format of the beginning of an essay:

	Name
	Class
	Date
Title	
Begin your essay here. All subsequent paragraphs should follow the same format as the one here.	

Writing projects require the use of a computer and Microsoft Word, a word processing program. This program is available on school computers and at the DC Public Library. Students should print their work or request teacher assistance and prior to the start of class on the due date. Please plan accordingly.

No passes will be given or accepted to permit printing during class time or retrieve class materials.

Writing projects may be submitted up to two days after the posted deadline for partial credit.

Spelling/Vocabulary/Grammar:

We will study spelling rules and vocabulary words, as well as common Greek and Latin roots that form many of the English words that we use today. You must record these rules, vocabulary words, and roots and drill them in order to be prepared for regular quizzes. We will also work on sentence diagramming and grammar with the support of a grammar course workbook. This workbook will be kept in the classroom. If lost, the student will need to purchase a replacement.

Guidelines for English Homework; Due Dates

In keeping with Washington Latin's homework policy, you will be expected to spend 20-25 minutes on English homework. All written homework assignments must be done using full, complete sentences and must contain textual support. Homework is assigned on days that class is held, but when there is an anticipated school closure (for example, inclement weather), homework assignments will be posted on the wikispace and students must complete those assignments and submit them on the next school day.

Homework should be submitted at the start of class on the date it is due. Late homework is not accepted. Homework assignments are considered late if they are not submitted or presented at the start of class **except** for cases involving an emergency. Please do not submit them via email **after** the class starts. Students who are present at school but miss English class because of a sports event, extra-curricular activity, or scheduled doctor's visit must submit their assignments/projects and collect their assignments prior to leaving school. Those students who are present in school but do not attend that day's English class will write the assessment on the next school day.

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Policy for Assignments/Projects Assigned or Assessments that Cover Material that a Student WAS PRESENT FOR or MISSED DUE TO A PLANNED ABSENCE:

Students who are absent from school when a homework assignment/project is due or an assessment is written but were at school when that assignment/project was assigned or the material for the assessment was covered, should turn in the assignment or write the assessment on the date that the student returns -- an additional day to make up the work or prepare for the assessment is not earned. Thus, if an assignment/project was due the day a student was absent from school or an assessment was given on that day, it will be due or administered immediately when the student returns to school.

Students who are absent from school due to a planned absence should request the homework assignments in advance, complete those assignments and submit them upon their return. The student MUST meet with Ms. Haywood or Ms. Whitfield on the day of his or her return to schedule any assessments. The student is responsible to get the class notes and worksheets.

Policy for Assignments/Projects Assigned or Assessments that Cover Material that a Student WAS NOT PRESENT FOR:

Students who are absent from school when a homework assignment/project was assigned or when the material for an assessment was covered may make up any missed work. Students who have to make up any test or quiz may receive an alternative assessment. Obtaining materials and information about the missed assignments/projects and scheduling the assessment is the student's responsibility. Upon returning to school after an excused absence related to illness or family emergency students will have a three-day extension to complete each missing assignment/project and to prepare for the assessment. The student should review dates and times to make up all assessments and class work directly with Ms. Haywood or Ms. Whitfield.

Class Preparation/Participation

Your preparation for class involves completing the assigned work as well as bringing all of your required materials to class. Your participation also includes listening to your classmates and teacher, staying on task, playing a role in class and group activities, contributing to class discussions, and acting with respect toward your classmates and teacher.

Organization:

You must keep all notes, assignments, drafts, and other work that you do in English class. You should not throw away materials at the end of a unit or quarter. You will need them in later units and for the final examination at the end of the year. Major graded assessments will be filed in the classroom. At the end of each writing project, all drafts (including the final) will be kept in your portfolio in the classroom.

Expectations for Behavior:

- 1) Please wait for a teacher to invite you into the English classroom,
- 2) Always do your own work, and give it your best effort.
- 3) Only English work may be done in the class.
- 4) Show that you know the class routine.
- 5) Be respectful of the English classroom, other people and their belongings.
- 6) Follow the technology policy and safeguard WLPCS laptops and i-Pads.
- 7) Listen with a lowered hand when someone else is speaking.
- 8) Raise your hand if you have a question or want to participate.
- 9) Use polite and respectful language at all times.
- 10) Be prepared for every class. You will not be given a pass to your locker once class has begun.
- 11) Whenever possible, attend to personal hygiene and other needs such as bathroom breaks before class.
- 12) No food, gum, drinks (except water), or cell phones in class.
- 13) No note-passing.
- 14) Always wait for the teacher to end the class before you store your belongings and get ready to leave.
- 15) Arrive promptly for tutorial sessions.

English Honor Code:

8th grade students are expected to exhibit respectful and ethical behavior. The English Honor Code requires that you do your own work. Any violation of this requirement will result in the loss of credit for the assessment or assignment. Any case of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or academic dishonesty is a violation of this honor code and will receive a zero. We may inform your parent/guardian of the offense and refer the situation to the Dean of Students.

CHEATING allows a student to improve his or her grade in an unfair manner. It also includes assisting another student to get credit for work or an improved grade. Some examples of cheating are:

1. Using any materials not expressly allowed by the teacher, such as notes or a study guide to complete an assessment or assignment. This includes using another source, such as CliffNotes or SparkNotes, to get ideas on how to answer questions on homework or bringing in a cheat sheet for an assessment.
2. Looking at another student's work, including homework, to obtain an answer, correct work, or any form of communication between students during an assessment. This includes asking another student for help during an assessment, copying homework from others, allowing others to copy your work, and sharing answers with others.
3. Talking or communicating about an assessment when one of the students has already written the assessment. This includes sharing questions from an exam as well as content covered by the exam. If you have taken the exam or test, do not "assist" others in reviewing for the test or explaining what the test covers.
4. Using materials from another student, including a sibling, from a previous class year. This includes reading over previous assessments, annotations, and class notes that are not provided to all students during this current year.

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PLAGIARISM is an ethical violation because the student wrongly claims credit for ideas either intentionally or unintentionally. This commonly happens when a student

1. Does not use quotation marks when quoting directly from a source,
2. Copies phrases or ideas from a written text, presentation, audio recording, Internet, or other source and does not give credit to the author.
3. Rewords information or paraphrases ideas without proper citation.
4. Turns in the work of another person, including a peer, sibling, or parent, as his or her own work.
5. Gives an oral presentation that is the work of another person.
6. Buys a paper off the Internet and uses the words/ideas as his or her own.
7. Obtains significant assistance from another person that is unauthorized or done without attribution.

FABRICATION is when a student misrepresents a fact to improve his or her grade or receives an extension on a deadline for a homework assignment, project or assessment. It takes place when a student

1. Changes an answer on a completed assignment or assessment and claims that it was graded **incorrectly.**
2. Cites non-existent reference materials or made-up sources.
3. Deceives a teacher about the completion or submission of an assignment.
4. Makes up a false reason or excuse to get special consideration or an extension on an assessment, project, or assignment.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY is when a student is not truthful about his or her academic conduct. It may include

1. Turning in the same paper in two or more classes without the consent of both teachers.
2. Submitting work from another class or re-submitting work from a previous year to satisfy an assignment.
3. Working with another student when independent work is specified.
4. Allowing someone to use your work and turn it in as his/her own.
5. Falsifying a graded work.
6. Using any electronic device. (i.e. camera, phone, etc.) or other equipment to obtain or transmit information about an assessment.
7. Reviewing work assigned to students in a previous year at WLPCS to prepare for an assessment.

If you have any questions about what cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or academic dishonesty is, please speak with Ms. Haywood or Ms. Whitfield.

Grade Information:

Your overall English grade is based on a weighted system.

Homework/class assignments	20%
Writing projects	35%
Quizzes and tests	25%
Class participation	20%

(Extra credit work is NOT routinely offered during each quarter.)

Year-Long Term Grades:

Quarter One	20%
Quarter Two	20%
Quarter Three	20%
Quarter Four	20%
Final Exam	20%

(An English Final Exam is given to all 8th graders and constitutes 20% of the overall grade.)

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High School Recommendations:

If you are considering attending high school elsewhere and need a recommendation from your English teacher, you **must** provide **sufficient** notice (10 business days), and provide a **self-addressed, self-stamped envelope** for the school. If the recommendation is to be filled out online, the request must be sent to me via email 10 business days in advance. Be sure that you fill out all parts of the recommendation that need to be completed by a student or guardian first. We will mail all recommendations directly to the school; for confidentiality purposes, we cannot return forms to you.

Also, please keep courtesy in mind that we prefer that you, the student, ask us in person to complete a recommendation. We will not complete recommendations that we find on our desk or in our mail folders, unless you have already asked us to complete one.

Honors Courses at WLPCS Upper School:

Students who receive a B+ or higher and are recommended by the English teacher may be considered for Honors English in 9th grade.

Please share this information packet with your parent/guardian, and return the signature page to Ms. Haywood and Ms. Whitfield upon its completion. Please file the information packet in your binder for future reference.

SIGNATURE PAGE

I, _____, (student's first and last names) understand the grading policy and expectations for Ms. Haywood and Ms. Whitfield's English class. Ms. Haywood and Ms. Whitfield have reviewed this packet with my peers and me and have answered questions about these policies and expectations.

I was assigned to read this packet as homework and to review the class rules and English Honor Code and discuss them with my parent or guardian.

I know that it is my responsibility to ask for clarification of these policies and the English Honor Code. I understand that any violation of the English honor code will result in the loss of credit for my work and possible discipline by the Dean of Students.

I know I can email Ms. Haywood and/or Ms. Whitfield at anytime and have been provided with their email addresses and telephone numbers to contact them.

By signing, my parent/guardian and I agree that we understand the policies and pledge to abide by all class rules to make the English classroom a safe, respectful, fair, and organized place where everyone can learn.

Student signature

Date

Parent/Guardian signature

Date